

**March 27, 2014 meeting minutes  
Cambridge GLBT Commission**

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014**

Call to Order.

Kevin Shpritzer recorded these minutes.

Agenda for the March 27 meeting was accepted.

The minutes of the February 27 meeting were approved.

**Commissioners Present:** Kevin Shpritzer, Aren Stone, Mal Malme, Kristina Mastropasqua, John Gintell, Neil Scannell, Anna Weick, Bill Barnert, Caitlin Drechsler, Mike McKenna, Rachel Oppenheimer, Kara Smith, Neil MacInnes-Barker, Maggie Giles, Bob Parlin, Lesley Phillips

**Commissioners Absent:** (excused) – Steven Lee, Danny Venezia, Gregory Grays-Thomas, Paul Miller

**Guests:** Chris Burke (Supt. of Police), Needham Hurst, Sam Greenberg, Sarah Rosenkrantz (leaders from Harvard Square Homeless Shelter), Ed Byrne (Coordinator of Student Diversity Programs at CRLS and aid to Mayor Maher), Avinaash, Gabrielle, Sarah (students at Harvard and members of HBASIS)

**I. Welcome**

- a. Commissioners and guests introduced each other.

**II. Harvard Square Homeless Shelter**

- a. Leaders from the shelter presented to the Commission.
- b. This is an entirely student run shelter.
- c. 24-29 guests are served each night.
- d. They serve meals and offer a variety of other services
- e. The shelter celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year.
- f. The shelter has a good reputation among the local homeless population.
- g. Youth on Fire has helped make them aware of the problem of youth homelessness.
- h. They're planning to establish a Youth Housing Program, with YOF consulting, to meet the rising need for beds for youth by offering a safe, supportive night-time sanctuary. The space would function as a shelter at night and as Youth On Fire's drop in center during the day.
  - i. Their primary goal is to open another 15 beds to youth.
  - ii. A secondary goal is to provide services, push for legislation, etc. to help reduce youth homelessness in the area.
- i. There is a demand for volunteers (they turn away over 100 each year) and guests (they turn away approximately 30 potential guests each day), so an additional space is warranted.
- j. There are two potential spaces that they have located in Harvard Square. They are both in church basements. They hope to choose a space within 3-4 weeks.

- k. Fundraising of around \$500,000 is needed to properly renovate one of these spaces for use as a shelter. Around \$70,000 has been raised to date.
- l. Operating costs for the shelter will be very low due to the large number of student volunteers (~\$17/bed per night vs. ~\$55/bed per night at most shelters)
- m. They hope to open the shelter by February 2015 with renovations to begin this fall.
- n. The Commission can help by sharing connections with the organizers and spreading awareness of this project.

### **III. May 16-17 event – 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of same-sex marriage**

- a. Ed Byrne reported that City Hall is excited about commemorating this event.
- b. The actual anniversary is May 17, but they would like an after-work event on Friday, May 16 with a speaker, a performance, and a wedding cake of some kind.
- c. They're putting together archival footage and photographs from the original event that will be on display at City Hall.
- d. Ed requested that a committee of commissioners who are interested in working on the event get together with him to hash out the details.
- e. The group will meet on Monday at 5:30pm.
  - i. Neil S., Aren, Maggie, Kara, Mal, and Mike are planning to attend the meeting. Other commissioners may join.

### **IV. Cambridge Rindge and Latin**

- a. CRLS had a successful National Coming Out Day assembly.
- b. Two straight-identified faculty were sent to the GLSEN (Gay Lesbian & Straight Education Network) retreat.
- c. They would like to train more teachers about how to respond to homophobic language and behavior.

### **V. HBASIS (Harvard BGLTQ & Allied Students in the Sciences)**

- a. Three members of HBASIS presented to the Commission.
- b. The groups consists of 45 members with a leadership team of 12.
- c. They're hoping to organize ongoing programs working with BGLTQ identified Seniors and offering science tutoring for BGLTQ youth
- d. They're trying to create a safe space where BGLTQ students in the sciences can feel comfortable and prosper.

### **VI. Police Report**

- a. Chris reported that he is now overseeing the Professional Standards Unit in the police department. They conduct background checks on prospective applicants to the police and fire departments.
- b. Year to date, 80 applicants for police and fire have been processed by this unit, and he has been very impressed with their credentials.
- c. Pro Ambulance is getting involved with the GOAL (Gay Officers Action League) New England cultural competency training.

### **VII. LGBT Teacher's event – April 16**

- a. This is being postponed until September.

- VIII. **LGBT Film Festival – April 4 – 7pm – Brattle Theater**
- a. Bob and Anna will have a Commission table at this event.
  - b. The film the Commission is sponsoring is called *The Ten Year Plan*.
  - c. Commissioners are encouraged to attend if possible.
- IX. **Harvard Square MayFair – May 4**
- a. Kevin has applied for the Commission's table at this event.
  - b. We will figure out over email which commissioners will run our table.
- X. **Youth Pride Parade – May 17**
- a. Bob will organize this event
- XI. **River Festival – June 7**
- a. Kevin has applied for the Commission's table at this event.
- XII. **Pride Brunch – June 14**
- a. John, Aren and Neil S. will meet with Ed Byrne in May to iron out the details of this event.
- XIII. **Give-Aways**
- a. Bill would like everyone to think if there are items that can be removed from the Commission's outreach tables or others that should be added.
  - b. We would like more kid-friendly items.
    - i. Ideas are stickers, tattoos, and other colorful and shiny items.
  - c. Steven won't be back in town for a while, so we need to work on getting items ordered without him.
  - d. Kara volunteered to take on this role.
- XIV. **Facebook page policy**
- a. What should we do if there are homophobic comments posted on our Facebook page?
  - b. We agreed that we want to allow negative comments to be on the page, but expletive-laced comments and personal attacks should be removed.
  - c. We will discuss this policy in greater depth at the April meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.